

Violations of Iraqi Children's Rights

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In-depth Report: [IRAQ REPORT](#)

I pride myself in being a scientist and a researcher. I built my academic career on theories and numbers. As a teacher, I teach my students that everything is based in science - everything has a reason. That is why, I am always frustrated with myself when I find I am overwhelmed with feelings on specific topics.

One such topic is the occupation of my country, Iraq. On this subject I find that I cannot always be dispassionate. I cannot be the researcher and observer and discuss it without feelings or emotions as I am sometimes expected to do. I find myself doing research on the damages caused by the war and occupation, and my head buzzes with anger, my eyes burn with tears of desperation at the state of my country.

I decided, I would view it as a scientist. I would not attack the subject with emotion. I would let the numbers speak for themselves. This year I will sit back and play the part of the analyst- the researcher- on the topic that is closest to my heart.

We will show that the American occupation violated children's rights on all levels, including health care, education, social security, family unity and non separation of children from their parents through detention, imprisonment and exile

For two decades, Iraqi children, along with all other elements of Iraqi society, have been subjected to grave violations of human rights.

The American occupation forces, and the occupation-assigned Iraqi government, grossly failed to fulfill their most basic duties towards the children of Iraq in accordance with the UN/CRC Convention on the Rights of the Child, Resolution 25/ Session 44, November 1989. The convention was ratified by 194 United Nations countries, except the USA and Somalia.

Principals of the CRC emphasized the need to protect children's rights' to life and physical, mental, moral, and spiritual development in a safe environment.

Numerous violations of Iraqi children's rights have systematically and continuously been committed under the American occupation of Iraq.

We will show that the American occupation violated children's rights on all levels, including health care, education, social security, family unity and the non separation of children from their parents through detention, imprisonment and exile.

1. Iraqi Children under the Economic Sanctions (1990-2003)

During the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq, the country was denied the right to import equipment, medicine, educational items, health care requirements, etc. The economic

sanctions were imposed by US/UK administrations and enforced by UN resolution 661 in 1990. The sanctions committee in the UN was dominated by the USA and UK, who insisted on blocking most essentials related to human rights

2. Status of Iraqi Children under the Anglo-American Occupation of Iraq

Thirteen years of suffering and the death of more than half a million children under five as a result of economic sanctions ended with the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. Iraqi people, and children have had to face the excessive use of power, shock and awe techniques, raids, the destruction of infrastructure, burning and looting of the civil services and cultural centers of Iraq, damage to health care centers and hospitals, and sectarian killing staged by occupation intelligence. Numerous violations of Iraqi children's rights have continuously and systematically been committed under the Anglo- American occupation of Iraq.

- Direct killing during the military invasion operations where civilians were targeted directly. Additional casualties amongst children have resulted from unexploded ordinances along military engagement routes.

- The direct killing and abuse of children during American troop raids on civilian areas like Fallujah, Haditha, Mahmudia, Telafer, Anbar, Mosul, and most of the other Iraqi cities[17]. The Massacre of the children in Haditha in 2005 is a good example of "collateral damage" among civilians.

- Daily car bombs casualties, explosion of buildings and other terrorist attacks on civilians.

- Detention and torture of Iraqi children in American and Iraqi governmental prisons. While in detention, the children are being brutalized, raped, and tortured. American guards videotaped these brutal crimes in Abu Graib and other prisons.

- Poverty due to economic collapse and corruption caused acute malnutrition among Iraqi children. As was reported by Oxfam in July 2007, up to eight million Iraqis required immediate emergency aid, with nearly half the population living in "absolute poverty".

- Starving whole cities as collective punishment by blocking the delivery of food, aid, and sustenance before raiding them increased the suffering of the young children and added more casualties among them.

- Microbial pollution and lack of sanitation including drinking water shortages for up to 70% of the population caused the death of "one in eight Iraqi children" before their fifth birthday. Death of young children in Iraq has been attributed to water borne diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, typhoid, hepatitis, etc .

- Contaminating and exposing other heavily populated cities to chemically toxic and radioactive ammunitions. Weapons like cluster bombs, Napalm, white phosphorous, and Depleted Uranium all caused drastic increases of cancer incidences, deformations in children, multiple malignancies and child leukemia. Children in areas like Basrah, Baghdad, Nasriya, Samawa, Fallujah, Dewania and other cities have been having multifold increases of such diseases. Over 24% of all children born in Fallujah in October 2009 had birth defects. The Minister of Environment in Iraq called upon the international community to help Iraqi authorities in facing the huge increase of cancer cases in Iraq.

■ The deterioration of the health care system and the intentional assassination of medical doctors have resulted in an increased number of casualties amongst children. It has been estimated that the mortality rate amongst the population of Iraq reached 650,000 from 2003 to 2006. Another survey indicated that the total number of dead for the period of 2003-2007 is about one million. Among other cases, the failures of the health care system were specified as one of the major causes.

■ Damage to the educational system. By 2004, it was estimated that two out of every three Iraqi children were dropping out of school. Statistics released by the Ministry of Education in October 2006 indicated that only 30% of the 3.5 million students were actually attending schools. Prior to the US invasion, UNESCO indicated that school attendance was nearly 100%. Assassination of educators and academics in Iraq drove their colleagues to leave the country. This brain drain and the intended destruction of schools and the educational system is part of the well planned cultural cleansing of the Iraqi society and identity.

■ Total collapse of Iraq's economy, the sectarian violence, American troop raids on civilians, the killing of a dear family member have all deprived the children in Iraq of an innocent, carefree childhood that is the right of any child. They have to deal with family breakdowns, poverty, and a complete and total lack of security. Iraqi children are being forced to assume income generating roles because their families are suffering from hunger and poverty. They are leaving schools and having to deal with adult problems such as unemployment, manual labor, etc. This situation exposes them to hardship, and many forms of abuse. Exposure to violence on a daily basis has affected their psychological development and behavior as well.

■ The drastic increase in the number of orphans in Iraq. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs estimated the number of Iraqi orphans to be around 4.5 million. Other estimates put them at around 5 million. About 500,000 of those orphans live on the streets without any home or family or specialized institutions to take care of them. Among these orphans, 700 are in Iraqi prisons and another 100 in American prisons.

■ The problems of families who were forced to migrate and the impact on their children. Since the invasion of Iraq, there have been about 2.2 million internally displaced people who were forced to migrate due to sectarian violence, American violence, etc. Well over two million other Iraqis were driven out of Iraq. On November 20, 2007 UNESCO reports indicated that the number of Iraqi children taking refuge in Syria alone was around 300,000. The problems of children who have been forced to migrate represent a real humanitarian crisis where a large number of families have no shelter, no finances, no health care, no education, and no security of any kind.

3. Deterioration of Living Conditions of Displaced Iraqi Children

This case study was conducted by the author with the help of the Iraqi Women Will body (IWW), an Iraqi NGO fighting for Iraqi women's rights inside and outside of Iraq.

In October 2009, around 300 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to Iraqi families within the Yarmouk refugee area of Damascus, Syria. The researchers visited these families to ensure the accuracy of the answers and to conduct personal interviews.

You can read the case study and the conclusions on the website of The BRussells Tribunal [here](#).

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